

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03427 01 OF 02 221248Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 MCT-01 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 IO-13 /075 W
-----019504 221327Z /42

P R 220801Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0000
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
DIA WASHDC//
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//J2 & EUDAC
USEUCOM AIDES VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3427

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT MOPS LE SY
SUBJ: WHO KILLED TONY FRANJIYAH? - IV

REF: BEIRUT 3289

1. SUMMARY: ADF "COMMANDER" ABNYYSRN
ES THAT
BACHIR GEMAYEL AND OTHER PHALANGE MILITIA LEADERS
PLANNED THE OPERATION AGAINST IHDEN ON JUNE 13, AND THAT
ITS PURPOSE WAS TO ASSASSINATE TONY FRANJIYAH. HE DOUBTS
THAT PIERRE GEMAYEL WAS AWARE THAT THE ASSASSINATION WAS
THE PURPOSE. HE DOUBTS THAT THE SYRIANS WILL REACT IN
ANY MEANINGFUL WAY TO THE ASSASSINATION. IN THE SOUTH,
THE LEBANESE ARMY WILL NOT MOVE UNTIL THE CHRISTIAN
MILITIA THREAT IS DISPOSED OF. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 03427 01 OF 02 221248Z

2. EMBOFF CALLED ON ADF "COMMANDER" LT. COLONEL
SAMI KHATIB JUNE 21.

3. THE OPERATION AGAINST IHDEN, KHATIB SAID, WAS MOUNTED
PRINCIPALLY IN BEIRUT. THE MAIN COLUMN PROCEEDED
NORTHWARDS, NOT AT ANY POINT ALONG THE COASTAL ROAD,

BUT ENTIRELY VIA INLAND ROUTES, WITH WHICH THE PHALANGE WAS QUITE FAMILIAR SINCE THE DAYS OF THE "MOUNTAIN WAR" WITH THE PALESTINIANS IN 1976. PRIOR TO ITS ARRIVAL IN THE IHDEN AREA, MILITIA LEADERS BOUTROS KHAWAND AND DIB ANISTAS HAD ESTABLISHED FORWARD OPERATION CENTERS AT HASROUN AND AT HADET EL JIBBE. THE OPERATION WAS WELL CONCEIVED: FIRST AN ELEMENT ESTABLISHED AN 82 MILIMETER MORTAR POSITION ABOUT TWO KILOMETERS EAST OF IHDEN, AND OPENED FIRE. THIS WAS A DIVERSIONARY ATTACK, AND IT SUCCEEDED IN CAUSING THE DEFENDERS TO LEAVE THE AREA WEST OF IHDEN EXPOSED. MILITIA LEADER EDMOND SAYHOUN THEN LED AN ATTACK GROUP ON THE GROUND VIA AIN TANNINE, WHICH DIRECTLY ATTACKED TONY FRANJIYAH'S HOUSE FROM THE WEST.

4. KHATIB SAID THAT THE LEBANESE AIR FORCE DID INDEED SEND TWO HAWKER HUNTER AIRPLANES OVER THE AREA, BUT ONLY TO RECONNOITER, NOT TO ATTACK THE WITHDRAWING FORCE (AS BACHIR GEMAYEL HAD ALLEGED). ALL THE CASUALTIES WHICH THE PHALANGE SUFFERED (KHATIB SAID THERE WERE 18 PHALANGE DEAD) WERE AS A RESULT OF AMBUSH ACTION BY ZGHARTAWI ELEMENTS.

5. THE SYRIANS, AS SOON AS THEY HAD LEARNED OF THE INCIDENT, HAD DISPATCHED A REACTION FORCE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 03427 01 OF 02 221248Z

IT WAS A TANK BATTALION BASED IN SYRIA "IN THE CENTRAL SECTOR." ALTHOUGH TRAVELING AS FAST AS POSSIBLE, IT DID NOT ARRIVE IN THE ZGHARTA-IHDEN AREA UNTIL ABOUT 1000, SEVERAL HOURS AFTER THE COMMANDO RAID HAD BEEN COMPLETED. THERE HAD BEEN NO SYRIAN REINFORCEMENTS IN THE NORTH SINCE.

6. KHATIB WAS QUITE CERTAIN THAT THE PHALANGE ATTACK FORCE DID NOT PASS ANY LEBANESE (OR SYRIAN) ARMY CHECKPOINTS PROCEEDING THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS TO THE OPERATION, BUT HE WAS UNCLEAR AS TO WHETHER OR NOT IT PASSED ANY CHECKPOINTS DURING ITS WITHDRAWAL.

7. KHATIB COMMENTED THAT THE PHALANGE OFTEN SPREAD STORIES THAT IT DOMINATED THE REGULAR LEBANESE ARMY AND ITS OFFICERS, AS PART OF A CAMPAIGN TO CREATE A MYTH OF INVINCIBILITY. IN FACT, KHATIB SAID, THE PHALANGE MILITARY APPARATUS WAS NOT REALLY ALL THAT STRONG. ITS REAL FIGHTING ELEMENTS CONSISTED ONLY OF A FEW HUNDRED TROOPERS (PRINCIPALLY THE SKS), AND EVEN THEY WERE NOT ALL THAT EFFECTIVE. HOWEVER, AT ANOTHER POINT IN THE CONVERSATION, KHATIB, IN

DESCRIBING THE METHODS OF OPERATION OF THE PHALANGE MILITARY AS COMPARED TO THOSE OF THE NORTHERNERS, NOTED THAT THEY WERE CAPABLE OF EXECUTING FAIRLY LARGE-SCALE OPERATIONS WITH SOME SUCCESS. AT THE SAME TIME, HE DENIGRATED THE PURELY MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IHDEN OPERATION, SAYING IT WAS ESSENTIALLY A LARGE-SCALE COMMANDO OPERATION AGAINST A VIRTUALLY UNDEFENDED TARGET.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03427 02 OF 02 221913Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 MCT-01 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 IO-13 /075 W
-----022365 221921Z /41/42

P R 220801Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8370
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
DIA WASHDC//
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE//J2 & EUDAC
USEUCOM AIDES VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 3427

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

8. KHATIB SAID THAT BACHIR GEMAYEL AND HIS MOST INTIMATE MILITARY ADVISORS PLANNED THE OPERATION, AND THAT THE TARGET OF THE OPERATION WAS THE ASSASSINATION OF TONY FRANJIYAH. HE WAS DOUBTFUL THAT SHIEKH PIERRE WAS CLEARLY AWARE THAT THIS WAS THE SPECIFIC INTENT OF THE OPERATION. THIS WAS JUST TOO UNREASONABLE. SHIEKH PIERRE HIMSELF HAD SONS.

9. RETRIBUTION. IN KHATIB'S VIEW, THE ZGHARTAWIS WOULD RESPOND BY ASSASSINATING FIRST BACHIR GEMAYEL, SECONDLY, AMINE GEMAYEL. WHETHER THEY WOULD STOP

AT THAT OR GO FURTHER, HE DID NOT KNOW. NEXT ON THE LIST IN ANY CASE WOULD BE PIERRE GEMAYEL AND, FINALLY, MEMBERS OF THE PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU. Khatib
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 03427 02 OF 02 221913Z

SAID IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GEMAYELS TO PREVENT AN ASSASSINATION, ALTHOUGH IT MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME. HE NOTED THAT EVEN PRESIDENT KENNEDY, WITH ALL THE SECURITY APPARATUS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, WAS ASSASSINATED BY A SINGLE SHARPSHOOTER. THE NORTH-ERNERS WOULD PURSUE THE GEMAYELS ABROAD, IF NECESSARY.

10. WOULD THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT REACT? Khatib SIAD THAT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS A CERTAINTY THAT BACHIR GEMAYEL WAS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR TONY FRANJIYAH'S ASSASSINATION, THE GOL "HAD NO LEGAL CASE" ON WHICH TO CONDUCT A PROSECUTION.

11. SYRIAN REACTION? Khatib SAID THAT THE SYRIANS, PARTICULARLY RIF'AT AL-ASSAD, WERE PERSONALLY SHOCKED, AS WERE THE LEBANESE, INCLUDING PRESIDENT SARKIS. HOWEVER, HE DOUBTED THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD RESPOND IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY. HE WAS UNCERTAIN AS TO THE FUTURE OF SYRIAN RELATIONS WITH PIERRE GEMAYEL.

12. SOUTH LEBANON. Khatib SAID THAT THE GENERAL PLAN FOR DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY INTO SOUTH LEBANON AS DESCRIBED TO EMBOFF EARLIER (BEIRUT 3162) REMAINED UNCHANGED. HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS HAD NOW ARISEN. THE LEBANESE ARMY COULD MOVE INTO THE UNIFIL ZONE ONLY AFTER UNIFIL WAS NOT ONLY IN CONTROL UP TO THE ISRAELI BORDER, BUT WAS "WELL INSTALLED" THROUGHOUT THE AREA. THE LEBANESE AND SYRIAN AUTHORITIES WERE RELYING ON ISRAELI "GOOD FAITH" AND, BARRING THAT, "ON GOD" (WHICH INCLUDED THE AMERICANS). IT APPEARED THAT SA'AD HADDAD WAS INDEED OBEYING ORDERS. THE ISRAELIS EXERTED PRIMARY CONTROL OVER THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 03427 02 OF 02 221913Z

BUT Khatib THOUGHT THAT BACHIR GEMAYEL DID HAVE SOME LIMITED INFLUENCE IN CONTROLLING THEM, AND THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO PRESSURE BACHIR.
PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, MURDER, DEPENDENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT03427
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780260-0771
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780632/aaaabbnf.tel
Line Count: 222
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d2a9bf83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 3289
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2254144
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WHO KILLED TONY FRANJIYAH? - IV
TAGS: PINT, MOPS, LE, (FRANGIEH, TONY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d2a9bf83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014